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RYAN TURNIPSEED

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06/04/2026 • Power & Market • Ryan Turnipseed

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It’s no secret that the emerging “New Right” is radically opposed to libertarianism. A glance at their commentators in alternative conservative media, the pronouncements of popular “Anon” accounts, or the recent chorus of prominent voices attacking Massie reveals a growing disdain for libertarian ideas. I’ve personally watched the New Right’s anti-libertarian philosophy refine itself and have long wanted to write a counterargument, only to run into the prohibitive hurdle of their criticisms being largely scattered and unorganized. That hurdle finally disappeared with a recent long-form interview between J. Burden, a prominent New Right interviewer, and Auron MacIntyre, a Blaze TV commentator, which concisely elaborates the New Right’s case against libertarianism, a case which libertarianism supposedly can’t answer. This article is my direct response to the objections raised in that interview. I will point readers toward (decades-old) libertarian writings refuting these objections. Both critics and adherents of libertarianism should benefit, with critics discovering a more robust philosophy than usually assumed and adherents learning where to strengthen their grasp on their own principles. In the section that follows, I restate the five broad objections and show where libertarians have addressed them.

Preamble and First Objection

To begin, the critics offer a short preamble explaining why they are voicing their objections now. They express frustration that libertarians have adopted a Cassandra-like demeanor regarding the Iran war and worry that right-wing politics may drift back toward libertarianism, which they regard as fundamentally

flawed. Auron MacIntyre adds that he never had a “libertarian phase” and therefore never delved much into thinkers like Mises and Hayek.

This lack of familiarity is worth noting, not to dismiss the objections that follow, but to illustrate how little libertarian authors are read outside libertarian circles. New Rightists routinely announce their unfamiliarity with libertarian material before launching into critique. The pattern is extremely common, and libertarians interested in defending their philosophy would do well to recognize the information asymmetry.

The first objection to libertarianism rests on its definition. Libertarians, they say, advocate freedom and therefore believe that the best society is the one in which the individual is constrained the least. However, this is a nontraditional definition of freedom, being a simple absence of coercion, rather than the classical ideal of acting in accordance with a “shared understanding of what is good.” That narrower definition renders libertarianism universalist and utopian, inverting the more conservative “ordered liberty” in which “liberty is about the government working for the collective good of the people.”

Libertarianism and classical liberalism are often criticized for fixating on coercion, yet this ignores the classical tradition’s fierce opposition to arbitrary government and tyranny. Locke captured it as subjection to “the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary will of another man” rather than the laws of nature, echoing Aristotle’s *Politics* III.16. Approached differently, government is arbitrary when its laws stray from

the eternal principles securing life, liberty, and property. The classical focus on coercion and its resulting arbitrariness is why Hayek, in the opening chapter of *The Constitution of Liberty*, traces "freedom" and "liberty" to their classical roots and concludes that minimizing coercion is their original meaning. Rothbard's *For a New Liberty* and *The Ethics of Liberty* take the minimization of coercion to its maximum extent, as declaring oneself part of the state does not magically legitimize seizing justly acquired property or another person.

As for the alleged universalism inherent to libertarianism, far from leveling cultures, many libertarians see abolishing the state as the surest safeguard of distinct peoples. Throughout history, it is the growth of the state that enforces egalitarianism and homogeneity, and its metaphysical justifications for growing have been soundly refuted since the 1940s.

Second and Third Objections

The second objection targets radical libertarianism and asks how to bring about a stateless society. Notably, the New Right goes a step further than usual arguments about practicality, insisting that a libertarian society first requires a state to brutally restore order and instill the cultural beliefs and practices necessary for self-governance. They cite Rothbard's "unleash the cops…" as proof that even the movement's giants endorse this approach, while accusing modern libertarians of rejecting the enforcement of rules altogether and merely acting as if a stateless order already exists. The root error, the critics maintain, lies in a flawed anthropology that rejects Hobbesian theory.

Libertarians, from Hayek to Rothbard to Samuel E. Konkin III, have developed multiple strategies for advancing liberty, including an earlier alliance with paleoconservatives to recover the cultural preconditions of freedom which later collapsed because the paleocons offered no intellectual reciprocity (the old Alt Right, along with today's New Right, doubled down). The critics also ignore that today's social disorder and frayed social bonds are caused by an ever-expanding state, so further centralizing power to impose order would therefore be grossly counterproductive. Rothbard's full prescription, "Cops must be unleashed… subject of course to liability when they are in error", shows he did not advocate a draconian security state to restore order, wanting instead to enforce just laws and rules—a qualification the New Right frequently and conveniently omits. Ironically, while Agorists better match the critics' caricature of libertarianism, advocating an ethical ideal of total separation from the state and its rules and institutions, their emphasis on parallel institutions and starving the regime of resources is shared by the New Right itself. Finally, libertarians have constantly rebutted Hobbesian anthropology for its lack of historical evidence, its internal contradictions, and for its implication that only a single global, absolutist state could secure peace. Rather, peaceful exchange and society are possible without a Hobbesian state because man is a rational being.

The third objection holds that libertarians wrongly assume that people prefer liberty. Rather, when the choice arises, most supposedly opt for the safety of statism over freedom. So how can libertarianism claim to be true in analysis and ethics if basically everyone disagrees with libertarianism?

Libertarianism's minority appeal is inherent; the ideology was designed for the highly productive, bourgeois elite. This explains why libertarians can never cut back the welfare state or the school system, and why it fails to attract ordinary people.

Demonstrated preferences show otherwise. Waves of migration from Mainland China to Hong Kong or from East Germany to West Germany or from the American coasts to the interior, each being polities originally similar save for their economic and political systems, show that people often choose liberty when they can to the point of uprooting their lives and families. Even if it were the opposite, libertarianism is not rendered any less just a system nor any less accurate an analysis of society. Besides, the New Right, itself a niche movement struggling with popular appeal, cannot credibly invoke majoritarianism or social-contract theory as the basis for an ideology's legitimacy.

A certain strand of libertarianism and classicalliberalism*does* target an elite minority—an approach the New Right should logically welcome given their own philosophy and political strategy. Yet many populist libertarians and liberals have long argued the opposite, showing that the state and its interventions harm ordinary people the most. So, both commoner and elite have found a home in the tradition, which is why libertarians are at the forefront of reforms such as implementing school choice or fighting eminent domain or liberalizing firearm laws.

Fourth and Fifth Objections

The fourth objection to libertarianism is increasingly common: libertarianism is doomed to lose because libertarians desire to be left alone rather than to use power to enforce their will. It

also makes them unable to rally behind a leader, necessary for establishing a political order. This loser mentality—seeking power to destroy it—explains why libertarians, who have now infected conservative thought, usually flee rather than fight tyranny. Even libertarianism's direct predecessors, the American Old Right, ultimately lost for these same reasons.

The argument, that seeking to be left alone or to destroy power renders an ideology politically infeasible, falls apart when applied to history, as there have been multiple examples of state power being radically rolled back. Also, while it is true that libertarians are split on the issue of leaders, libertarians yet remain one of the most organized ideological movements in America. The goal of organizing to limit or destroy state power, for which many have fought rather than fled, also appears preferable to the alternative presented by Lord Acton.

Now, did the Old Right lose because it sought to destroy rather than wield power? No. Rothbard, a primary source on this subject, shows it was the New Right of his day, figures like Buckley and Kirk, that betrayed the Old Right after its postwar renaissance. In the modern day, Buckley's brand of conservatism is dead, and the intellectual successors of the Old Right have never been more popular.

The critics then offer their final objection: libertarianism has never been tried and sustained. Early America doesn't count, because various states had established churches and blasphemy laws. History further shows that polities trend towards centralization and absolutism, and in the modern era towards democracy and mass mobilization. Finally, a collectivized society, like China or Revolutionary France, would be able to

violently subjugate the libertarian society due to their superior military capabilities, proving a libertarian polity infeasible.

While it is true that several of the founding states had blasphemy laws and established churches as colonies, the Revolution saw a wave of liberalization and disestablishment across the independent states. And while there were many societies in the new republic that enforced strict social regulations, those societies rarely lasted and often liberalized, as happened to the Puritans of New England as detailed in Conceived in Liberty. The alliance these former colonies formed under the Articles of Confederation (which, contrary to popular portrayal, was not inherently doomed to failure) was a good representation of a libertarian polity. Beyond America, there are many societies which libertarians happily claim, the longest-lasting being medieval Iceland and Cospaia, both lasting some three centuries (the latter lasting beyond the Napoleonic Wars) and ending their political arrangements peacefully. Finally, libertarians have spent the last few decades showing how a stateless or decentralized society could maintain its independence in the face of aggressive and potentially reemergent states, but if that is unconvincing and we are doomed to reemergent statism, then at least we will have had our time in the sun.

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